

## THE NORTHERN GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

(Continued from page 17.)

the Mexican work in El Paso of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. as one of hurtful friction with the Mexican work of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S., previously established, and as contrary to the agreement between the two Assemblies touching foreign work in cities having less than 100,000 population, therefore, the Executive Commission of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. directs that the said work of the U. S. A. Church among the Mexicans in El Paso be removed beyond the sphere of friction and hurtful rivalry, its location to be determined by the joint committees of the two Synods of Texas."

The following rules were adopted by the joint committees, in addition to the rules of comity already in existence:

"The covenants and agreements between the two Churches should be kept without modification or annulment, excepting through the contracting General Assemblies.

"The right is recognized of a particular church to withdraw from its own body to that of the other, where it is done at its own motion or at the permission of its supreme judicatories, and the proper ecclesiastical and legal steps are taken."

## Misunderstanding.

It seems that there was a misunderstanding of this report on the part of some, so the Executive Commission made the following additional report:

The portion of the report of the Executive Commission dealing with questions of comity with the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. was taken up. The commission presented the following, in addition to the report, as given last week:

"In presenting the report of the Executive Commission on certain matters of comity with the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. the commission desires to state to the Assembly that it has learned that its report has been wrongly interpreted in the public press in certain localities, which statements have worked an injustice to certain of the parties involved.

"The commission, therefore, desires that its action in the premises shall be interested and understood in harmony with the purpose and intent, which is as follows:

"1. The Executive Commission desires it to be understood that in Recommendation 5, of this report, regarding the relations of Dr. Barr and the Lafayette Avenue church of New Orleans, it has acted in an advisory capacity, and that the relations of Dr. Barr with this church are in the hands of the Presbytery of Jefferson, subject to the decisions of the higher courts of the Church.

"2. In the matter of the El Paso case the commission gave its direction on the assurance that concurrent action between the committees of the two Synods of Texas could and would be secured.

"The commission desires it to be known by the Assembly that according to statement made by representatives of the Presbytery of Jefferson and the Synod of Texas commissioners to this Assembly, their records show the Presbytery of Jefferson and the Synod of Texas both made an effort to confer with the corresponding bodies in the Presbyterian Church U. S., touching the matters complained of in the New Orleans case."

## Union Seminary.

Among the matters which had awakened much interest all over the Church was the question as to what action would be taken by the Assembly in regard to Union Seminary, New York. A number of overtures were

received. On these the Committee on Bills and Overtures reported as follows:

"In answer to Overtures No. 23. No. 24, No. 25, No. 155 to No. 157, Paper 153, complaining of the action of New York Presbytery 'in receiving and licensing candidates for the ministry whose theological beliefs do not accord with the doctrinal standards of our Church,' and to Overture No. 26, calling for a deliverance 'declaring that it is not only discourteous and unwarranted, but also unchristian and subversive of proper discipline for one Presbytery to assert that the ministers of another Presbytery or Presbyteries are untrue to their ordination vows,' your committee begs to present the following report:

"Commissioners from New York Presbytery and representatives of overturning Presbyteries appeared before the committee and made full and frank statements as to the issues involved. Complaint was made against the members of New York Presbytery for licensing, recently and on previous occasions, candidates who could not affirm their belief in the essential doctrine of the word of God and our standards that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary. The members of New York Presbytery felt deeply pained and aggrieved that the overturning Presbyteries should propose drastic action, not on the basis of the Presbytery's records, but on the basis of exaggerated and misleading newspaper reports. The brethren on both sides of the controversy, together with the members of your committee, expressed their strong conviction that this continued agitation was bringing reproach upon the Church—was hindering the cause of Christ—and that something must be done effectually to put a stop to it. It was proposed that these brethren themselves should confer as to the best remedy for the whole trouble. Having done so in a most earnest, prayerful and forbearing spirit, they presented a paper which to their minds embodied all that the exigencies of the situation demand, and which gave them great hope for the future peace and harmony of the Church. Your committee gave this paper due consideration, and were grateful to God for the manifest leading of the Holy Spirit, which had brought the aggrieved parties together, and which we felt led us, your committee, to the unanimous approval of said paper, as the basis of suitable action on the part of the Assembly.

"We, therefore, recommend the adoption of this paper in the earnest hope that it will allay all misunderstanding, prevent in the future any hasty or ill-advised judgment in public print of brethren in good and regular standing in the ministry, and serve as a warning to all Presbyteries against receiving and licensing any candidates for the ministry who cannot give their assent to all the fundamental doctrines of the Church.

## The Licensure of Candidates.

"Whereas, the records of the Presbytery of New York show that on April 10, 1916, that Presbytery licensed three candidates for the ministry who neither affirmed nor denied the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, on the following recommendation, 'noting that these candidates recognize critical difficulties in connection with the doctrine of the virgin birth, but at the same time state that their faith in this doctrine is of a growing character and they unqualifiedly declare their faith in the pre-existence and deity of our Lord and all the redemptive truth that is embodied in his life, teaching and his sacrificial death'; and

"Whereas, it is admitted that, by the constitution of the Church, each Presbytery is a judge of qualifications of candidates for the ministry, but

such Presbytery in licensing these candidates should strictly observe the declarations of the Confession of Faith in doctrinal matters;

"The General Assembly calls the attention of the Presbyteries to the deliverance of the General Assembly of 1910, which is as follows:

"1. It is an essential doctrine of the word of God and our standards that the Holy Spirit did so inspire, guide and move the writers of Holy Scripture as to keep them from error.

"2. It is an essential doctrine of the word of God and our standards that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.

"3. It is an essential doctrine of the word of God and our standards that Christ offered up 'himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God.'

"4. It is an essential doctrine of the word of God and of our standards concerning our Lord Jesus Christ that on the third day he arose from the dead with the same body with which he suffered, with which he also ascended into heaven and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father making intercession.

"5. It is an essential doctrine of the word of God as the supreme standard of our faith that our Lord Jesus showed his power and love by working mighty miracles. This working was not contrary to nature, but superior to it."

"Presbyteries are hereby enjoined not to license or ordain any candidate for the ministry whose views are not in accordance with this deliverance of 1910.

"This General Assembly renews its positive mandate with full expectation of loyal compliance by all our Presbyteries; and it is directed that when a candidate appears who is found to be not clear and positive on any one of the fundamentals of our faith, that his licensure be deferred until such time as in the judgment of the Presbytery he has become so."

Adopted.

This paper which was signed by Dr. McKibbin and Rev. Frank H. Stevenson, who were appointed by the Presbytery of Cincinnati to defend its action, and by fifteen of the sixteen commissioners from New York Presbytery, thus became the report of the Committee of Bills and Overtures and the unanimous action of the Assembly.

The Committee on Bills and Overtures, Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, chairman, after agreement with the Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries, reported on Overtures Nos. 1 to 22 and 149 as follows:

"In answer to Overtures Nos. 1 to 22 and 149, all dealing with the interpretation of the so-called Compact of 1870 and its implications, and raising certain inferential questions as to the relation of all our theological seminaries as to the appointment of professors, the character of their teaching and the Presbyterian oversight of candidates for the ministry to the General Assembly, and to the Presby-

terian Church in the U. S. A., we recommend that a special committee of seven, four elders and three ministers, be appointed by the moderator to take under consideration the questions that have been raised as to the action of the General Assembly of 1915, regarding this 'Compact of 1870' (see Minutes, page 148), especially as to the bearing of this action upon the legal status of all our seminaries; and also to investigate the whole subject of the relationship of these seminaries to the Church, and to the Assembly, and to each other, to advise as to any proceedings or actions which may be necessary to safeguard existing relationships, or to make these relationships more secure, uniform and mutually helpful, and to report to the next Assembly."

The report was adopted.

## Co-operation and Union.

This subject was presented in several connections. From the actions taken the following extracts are made:

The committee drew attention again to the following declaration of the Assembly, setting forth in clear terms the attitude of the Presbyterian Church towards other Churches:

"The Presbyterian Church holds Christian fellowship with all who confess and obey Jesus Christ as their divine Saviour and Lord, and acknowledges the duty of all Churches that

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